

# Completion Rates of First-Time in College Students at NOVA by Enrollment Status: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts

Research Report No. 04-16

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives

MARCH 2016

## **NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

### **OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES**

The purpose of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives is to conduct analytical studies and provide information in support of institutional planning, policy formulation, and decision making. In addition, the office provides leadership and support in research related activities to members of the NOVA community engaged in planning and evaluating the institution's success in accomplishing its mission.

When citing data from this report, the Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives must be cited as the source.

4001 Wakefield Chapel Road  
Annandale, VA 22003-3796  
(703) 323-3129  
[www.nvcc.edu/oir](http://www.nvcc.edu/oir)

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction .....	1
Section 1. Completion Rates of All FTIC Students at NOVA .....	2
Section 2. Completion Rates by Enrollment Status .....	4
Conclusion .....	7
Appendix.....	8
References .....	10

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1. Total Completion Rates of All First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts .....	2
Figure 2. Completion Rates at NOVA of All First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts.....	3
Figure 3. Completion Rates at Transfer-Out Institution of All First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts.....	3
Figure 4. Total Completion Rates of Full-Time First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts.....	4
Figure 5. Total Completion Rates of Part-Time First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts.....	5
Figure 6. Seven-Year Completion Rates of Full-Time, First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA: 2004-05 and 2008-09 Cohorts .....	6
Figure 7. Seven-Year Completion Rates of Part-Time, First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA: 2004-05 and 2008-09 Cohorts .....	6

## **List of Appendix Tables**

Table A1. Completion Rates of All First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts .....	8
Table A2. Completion Rates of Full-Time, First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts .....	8
Table A3. Graduation Rates of Part-Time, First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts .....	9

## **Introduction**

This Report examines the completion rates of five cohorts of first-time in college (FTIC) NOVA students from 2004-05 through 2008-09 who completed within three to seven years of entry.<sup>1</sup> Completion data includes students who either earned a degree at NOVA or who transferred out and completed at another institution in Virginia.

Although traditionally, community colleges are primarily concerned with three- and four-year completion rates, this Report extends the scope of analysis to seven years. Given that community colleges offer students a variety of enrollment options, such as full-time, part-time, and/or mixed enrollment status in order to serve a diverse student population, it is unsurprising that completion rates increase considerably when examined over this longer time period.

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: SCHEV Report: [http://research.schev.edu/gradrates/subcohorts\\_instprofile.asp](http://research.schev.edu/gradrates/subcohorts_instprofile.asp)

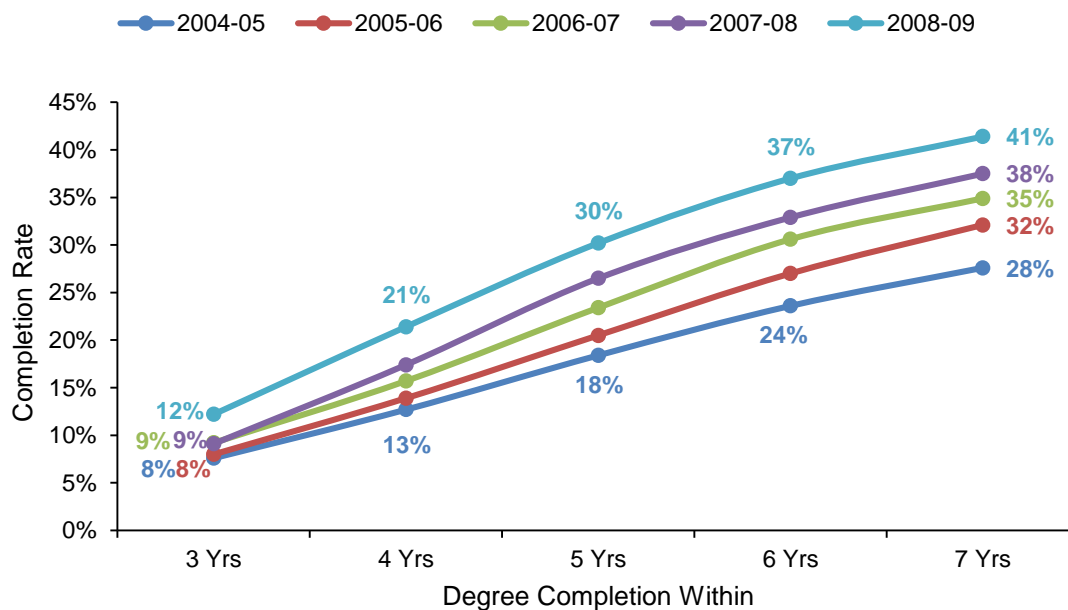
## Section 1. Completion Rates of All FTIC Students at NOVA

National data from the National Student Clearinghouse indicates that 39 percent of students who entered community colleges in Fall 2008 graduated within six years (Shapiro and Dundar, 2014). SCHEV data for NOVA indicates that 37 percent of all FTIC students who entered NOVA in 2008-09 graduated from any institution within six years.

### Overall Findings

Completion rates for all first-time in college (FTIC) students at NOVA increased steadily with each new cohort from 2004-05 through 2008-09 (Figure 1).<sup>2</sup> Over this time period, the seven-year completion rate increased by 13 percentage points, from 28 percent to 41 percent.

**Figure 1. Total Completion Rates of All First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts**

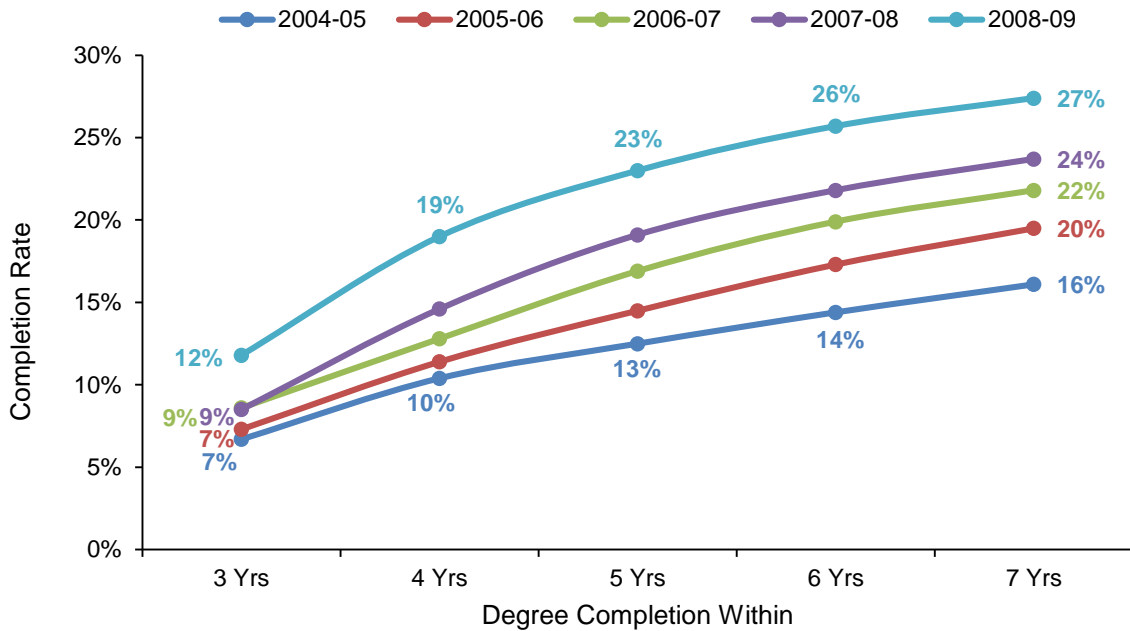


### Completion Rates at NOVA vs. Transfer Institutions

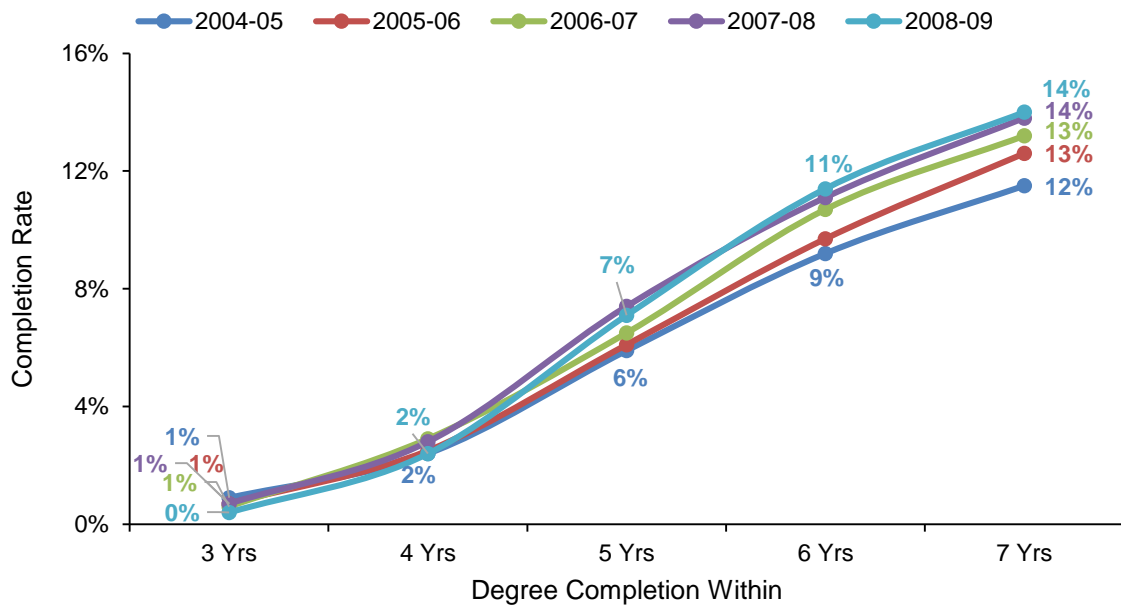
The increase in completion rates is noticeably greater among students who completed at NOVA than for those who transferred-out and completed elsewhere in Virginia. Seven-year completion rates of students who completed at NOVA increased by 11 percentage points (from 16 percent to 27 percent), while those of students who transferred and completed elsewhere increased by 2 percentage points (from 12 percent to 14 percent) (Figures 2 and 3).

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix for complete data tables.

**Figure 2. Completion Rates at NOVA of All First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts**



**Figure 3. Completion Rates at Transfer-Out Institution of All First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts**



## Section 2. Completion Rates by Enrollment Status

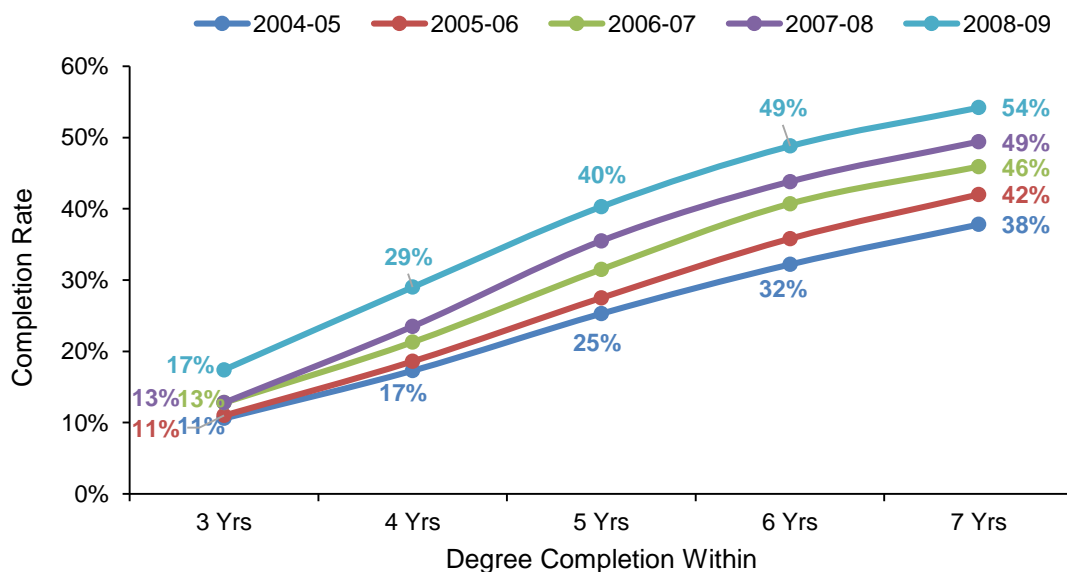
Measures to improve the completion rates of part-time students are particularly important in community colleges, as these students comprise the majority of community college students. In the United States, 59 percent of community college students enroll part-time (CCCSE, 2012). At NOVA in the cohorts presented here, the percentage of the student body enrolled part-time ranged from 64 to 67 percent.<sup>3</sup>

### Overall Findings

Although completion rates increased over time for both full- and part-time students, the data reveal substantial differences in the completion rates of full-time versus part-time students. The disparity is not surprising given that part-time students, by definition, enroll in fewer credits.

- The completion rate for FTIC students who began as full-time students steadily increased with each new cohort (Figure 4).
- The seven-year completion rate for full-time students increased by 16 percentage points, from 38 percent for the 2004-05 cohort to 54 percent for the 2008-09 cohort.
- In comparison, among part-time students, the seven-year completion rate increased to a lesser degree by 6 percentage points, from 17 percent to 23 percent (Figure 5).

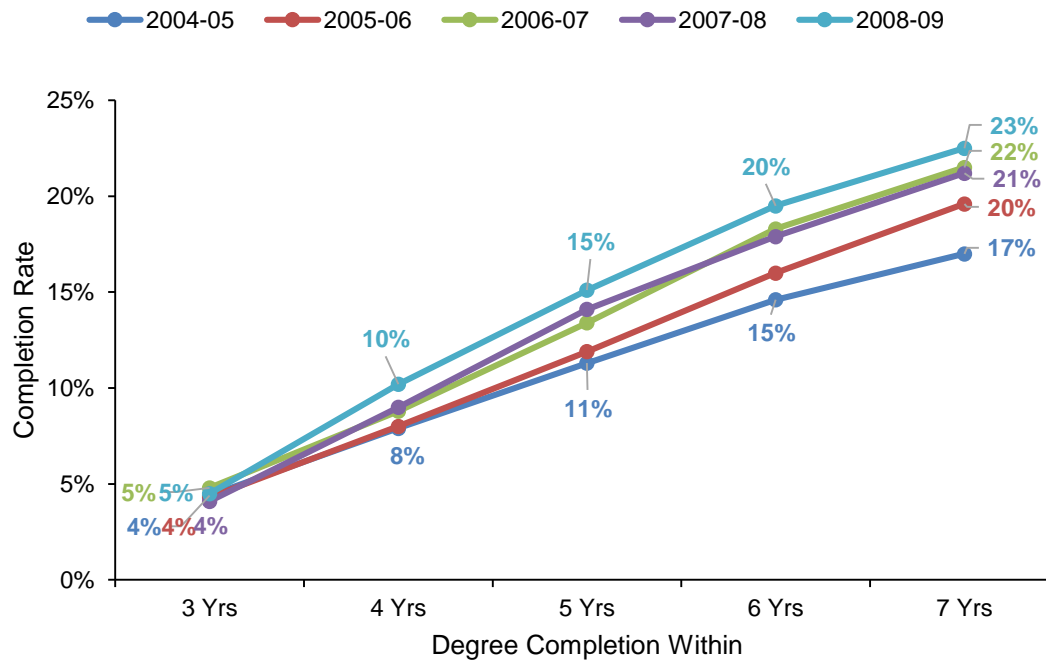
**Figure 4. Total Completion Rates of Full-Time First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts**



<sup>3</sup> NOVA Fact Book 2004-2008. <http://www.nvcc.edu/oir/factbooks.html>



**Figure 5. Total Completion Rates of Part-Time First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts**

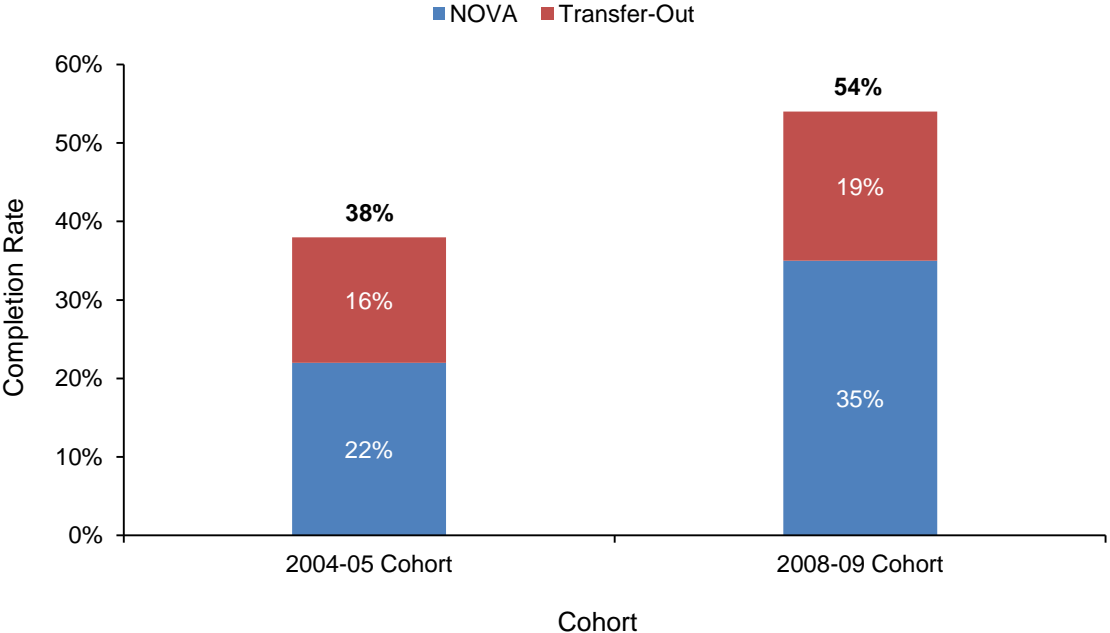


***Completion Rates at NOVA vs. Transfer Institutions***

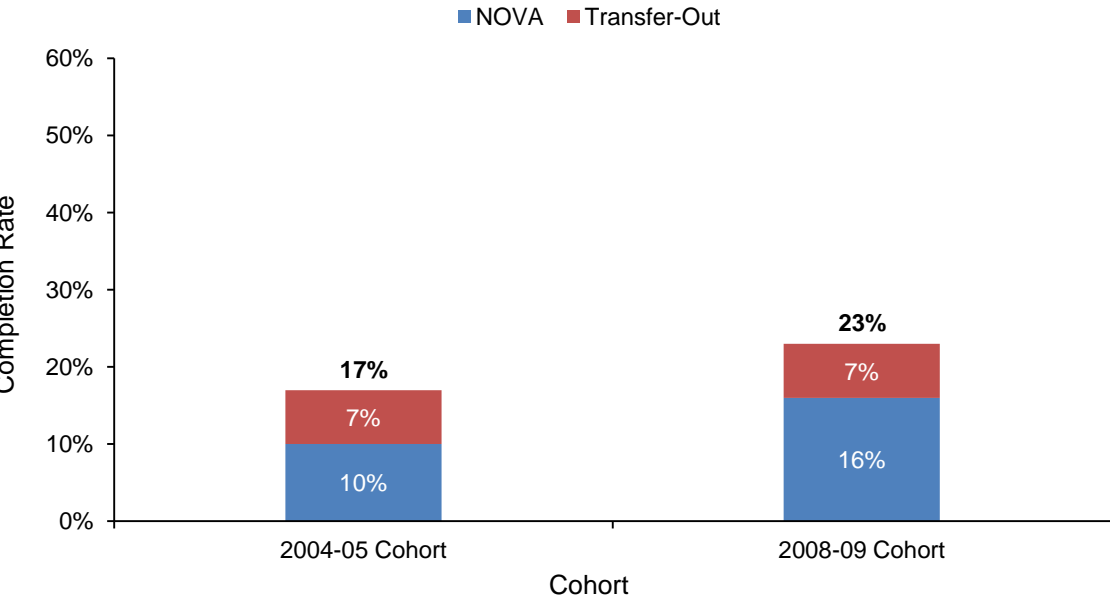
The percentage of full-time, FTIC students who completed degrees at NOVA within seven years increased by 13 percentage points, from 22 percent for the 2004-05 cohort to 35 percent for the 2008-09 cohort. In contrast, the seven-year completion rates of full-time, FTIC students who began at NOVA but transferred out to complete their degree increased by 3 percentage points, from 16 percent to 19 percent (Figure 6, next page).

Over the same time period, the percentage of part-time, FTIC students who completed their degrees at NOVA within seven years increased by 6 percentage points, from 10 to 16 percent. The seven-year rates of part-time students who transferred out to complete their degree decreased by about half a percentage point over the same time period (Figure 7, next page).

**Figure 6. Seven-Year Completion Rates of Full-Time, First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA: 2004-05 and 2008-09 Cohorts**



**Figure 7. Seven-Year Completion Rates of Part-Time, First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA: 2004-05 and 2008-09 Cohorts**



## **Conclusion**

Although the completion rates of FTIC students at NOVA steadily increased over time, especially for FTIC students who entered as full-time students, more study may be needed on how to support part-time and transfer-out students.

Finally, additional data needs to be examined on average credit load to completion to determine whether the tendency of students who enter as full-time or part-time remains consistent and what the average credit load per semester is for degree completers.

## Appendix

**Table A1. Completion Rates of All First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts**

Academic Year	Degree Completion	Degree Completion Within						
		1 Yr	2 Yrs	3 Yrs	4 Yrs	5 Yrs	6 Yrs	7 Yrs
2004-05	NOVA	0.2%	1.9%	6.7%	10.4%	12.5%	14.4%	16.1%
	Transfer-Out	0.1%	0.4%	0.9%	2.4%	5.9%	9.2%	11.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>18.4%</b>	<b>23.6%</b>	<b>27.6%</b>
2005-06	NOVA	0.1%	2.0%	7.3%	11.4%	14.5%	17.3%	19.5%
	Transfer-Out	0.1%	0.2%	0.7%	2.5%	6.1%	9.7%	12.6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>13.9%</b>	<b>20.5%</b>	<b>27.0%</b>	<b>32.1%</b>
2006-07	NOVA	0.2%	3.1%	8.6%	12.8%	16.9%	19.9%	21.8%
	Transfer-Out	0.0%	0.2%	0.6%	2.9%	6.5%	10.7%	13.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>15.7%</b>	<b>23.4%</b>	<b>30.6%</b>	<b>34.9%</b>
2007-08	NOVA	0.3%	2.5%	8.5%	14.6%	19.1%	21.8%	23.7%
	Transfer-Out	0.1%	0.2%	0.7%	2.8%	7.4%	11.1%	13.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>17.4%</b>	<b>26.5%</b>	<b>32.9%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>
2008-09	NOVA	0.1%	2.6%	11.8%	19.0%	23.0%	25.7%	27.4%
	Transfer-Out	0.1%	0.1%	0.4%	2.4%	7.1%	11.4%	14.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>30.2%</b>	<b>37.0%</b>	<b>41.4%</b>

**Table A2. Completion Rates of Full-Time, First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts**

Academic Year	Degree Completion	Degree Completion Within						
		1 Yr	2 Yrs	3 Yrs	4 Yrs	5 Yrs	6 Yrs	7 Yrs
2004-05	NOVA	0.2%	2.8%	10.0%	14.8%	17.5%	19.9%	22.2%
	Transfer-Out	0.0%	0.2%	0.6%	2.5%	7.8%	12.3%	15.6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>17.3%</b>	<b>25.3%</b>	<b>32.2%</b>	<b>37.8%</b>
2005-06	NOVA	0.2%	2.8%	10.4%	15.5%	19.3%	22.5%	24.9%
	Transfer-Out	0.0%	0.1%	0.6%	3.2%	8.2%	13.4%	17.1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>27.5%</b>	<b>35.8%</b>	<b>42.0%</b>
2006-07	NOVA	0.2%	4.4%	12.2%	17.4%	22.1%	25.6%	27.7%
	Transfer-Out	0.0%	0.2%	0.7%	3.9%	9.4%	15.1%	18.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>21.3%</b>	<b>31.5%</b>	<b>40.7%</b>	<b>45.9%</b>
2007-08	NOVA	0.3%	3.8%	12.2%	20.0%	25.2%	28.2%	30.1%
	Transfer-Out	0.0%	0.1%	0.6%	3.5%	10.3%	15.6%	19.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>23.5%</b>	<b>35.5%</b>	<b>43.8%</b>	<b>49.4%</b>
2008-09	NOVA	0.2%	3.8%	17.1%	25.9%	30.4%	33.2%	35.1%
	Transfer-Out	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	3.0%	9.9%	15.6%	19.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>17.4%</b>	<b>29.0%</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>48.8%</b>	<b>54.2%</b>

**Table A3. Graduation Rates of Part-Time, First-Time in College Students Entering NOVA in Fall and Spring: 2004-05 through 2008-09 Cohorts**

Academic Year	Degree Completion	Degree Completion Within						
		1 Yr	2 Yrs	3 Yrs	4 Yrs	5 Yrs	6 Yrs	7 Yrs
2004-05	NOVA	0.1%	1.0%	3.2%	5.8%	7.4%	8.7%	9.8%
	Transfer-Out	0.2%	0.6%	1.2%	2.2%	3.9%	5.9%	7.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>14.6%</b>	<b>17.0%</b>
2005-06	NOVA	0.1%	0.9%	3.4%	6.3%	8.4%	10.8%	12.6%
	Transfer-Out	0.2%	0.3%	0.9%	1.6%	3.4%	5.2%	7.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>16.0%</b>	<b>19.6%</b>
2006-07	NOVA	0.2%	1.4%	4.2%	7.1%	10.4%	12.9%	14.5%
	Transfer-Out	0.1%	0.2%	0.6%	1.7%	3.0%	5.4%	7.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>13.4%</b>	<b>18.3%</b>	<b>21.5%</b>
2007-08	NOVA	0.2%	0.7%	3.3%	7.2%	10.8%	13.0%	14.9%
	Transfer-Out	0.1%	0.3%	0.8%	1.9%	3.3%	4.9%	6.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>14.1%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>21.2%</b>
2008-09	NOVA	0.1%	0.8%	3.9%	8.8%	12.0%	14.4%	15.8%
	Transfer-Out	0.2%	0.2%	0.6%	1.4%	3.1%	5.1%	6.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>	<b>22.5%</b>

## References

Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE). (2012). *A Matter of Degrees: Promising Practices for Community College Student Success (A First Look)*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Community College Leadership Program.

Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Yuan, X., Harrell, A. & Wakhungu, P.K. (2014, November). *Completing College: A National View of Student Attainment Rates – Fall 2008 Cohort* (Signature Report No. 8). Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

## ***NOVA Mission and Strategic Goals***

### **Mission**

With commitment to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence, the mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to deliver world-class in-person and online post-secondary teaching, learning, and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia have an educated population and globally competitive workforce.

### **Strategic Goals**

- I. **STUDENT SUCCESS** – Northern Virginia Community College will move into the top tier of community colleges with respect to the college readiness, developmental course completion, retention, graduation, transfer, and career placement of its students.
- II. **ACCESS** – Northern Virginia Community College will increase the number and diversity of students being served to mirror the population growth of the region.
- III. **TEACHING AND LEARNING** – Northern Virginia Community College will focus on student success by creating an environment of world-class teaching and learning.
- IV. **EXCELLENCE** – Northern Virginia Community College will develop ten focal points of excellence in its educational programs and services that will be benchmarked to the best in the nation and strategic to building the College's overall reputation for quality.
- V. **LEADERSHIP** – Northern Virginia Community College will serve as a catalyst and a leader in developing educational and economic opportunities for all Northern Virginians and in maintaining the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the region.
- VI. **PARTNERSHIPS** – Northern Virginia Community College will develop strategic partnerships to create gateways of opportunity and an integrated educational system for Northern Virginians who are pursuing the American Dream.
- VII. **RESOURCES** – Northern Virginia Community College will increase its annual funding by \$100 million and expand its physical facilities by more than one million square feet in new and renovated space. This includes the establishment of two additional campuses at epicenters of the region's population growth, as well as additional education and training facilities in or near established population centers.
- VIII. **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS** – Northern Virginia Community College will be recognized as a leader among institutions of higher education in Virginia for its development and testing of emergency response and continuity of operation plans.

# NOVA

---

**Northern Virginia  
Community College**

**703-323-3000 | [www.nvcc.edu](http://www.nvcc.edu)**